REMARKS

Claims 1-32 are pending. Applicant has added claims 29-32 and amended claims 1, 10, 19, and 27.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-8, 10-14, 16-22, and 24-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Bunney, and claims 9, 15, 23, and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bunney in view of Aravamudan and Munday. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Applicant's representative would like to thank the Examiner for his consideration during the telephone interview of October 27, 2004. During that interview, applicant's representative and the Examiner discussed the Bunney reference and how the claims might more explicitly recite that a master status is generated for a user who is logged on via at least two different clients at the same time. Applicant has so amended the claims.

Bunney describes a "notification server" that operates in an environment where a user has multiple identities. For example, a user may have the identities of "George@compu.xxx.com," "Superman@sports.xxx.com," and "Max@game.xxx.com." Bunney's technology allows a user who is logged on using one identity to receive notifications of messages sent to one of their other identities. For example, if a user is logged on to "George@compu.xxx.com" and a message is sent to "Superman@sports.xxx.com," the user is notified of the message via their "George@compu.xxx.com" identity. The user can then switch to their other identity to view the message. Bunney describes that a user when working in one identity can indicate that they do not want to be receive notifications of messages sent to certain other of their identities. For example, a user logged on to a work-related identity may not want to receive notifications of messages sent their recreation-related identity. Bunney describes that a server tracks the identities for each user and the "current" identity to which the user is currently logged on so that the notifications can be sent to the current identity as appropriate. (Bunney, 8:22-9:32.)

Bunney also describes a "session manager" that tracks the current state of a user such as available, away, invisible, or busy. The state defines the availability of the user to receive notifications from other users. For example, when in the available state, a user will receive notifications from any user, and when in the busy state, the user will not receive any such notifications.

Applicant's technology, in contrast, is directed to maintaining the master status of a user who may be logged on via multiple clients to a group of users communicating in real time (e.g., via instant messaging) using clients. For example, I may log on to a group once using my desktop computer and again using my personal digital assistant so that I'm logged on through both clients at the same time. If I then log off of my personal digital assistant, then applicant's technology calculates a master status for me, which in this simple case may still be online. Since the statuses can be at various levels of detail, such as busy, idle, out to lunch, back soon, and on the phone, and may be conflicting, such as busy and idle, the determination of the master status of a user may be more complex. For example, if one client reports a status of busy and then another client reports as status of idle, the determination may be to ignore the idle status and leave the master status as busy, since the user may be idle at one client but busy at another.

Bunney neither teaches nor suggests that a master status is maintained for a user based on statuses reported by multiple clients to which the user is logged on. Bunney specifically teaches that a user can be logged on to only one identity at a time. Bunney refers to "current persona [or identity]," "switching of identity," and "connects as another persona" when a switch is detected. (Bunney, Fig. 5 at S9 and 10:8-26.) Since a user can have only one current identity at a time, Bunney has no master status that is derived from the statuses of multiple clients or multiple identities.
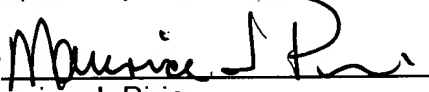
Each of the pending independent claims recites the concept of a master status that is derived from the status of multiple clients through which the user is logged on at the same time. Claim 1 recites "evaluating at least the first status update, the first view status,

and the second view status according to specified status rules to determine the master status of the electronic messaging user who is logged on via both the first client computer system and the second client computer system as an electronic messaging user." Claim 10 recites "creating at the server a view status for each of the one or more clients . . . the electronic messaging user being logged on as an electronic messaging user through at least two clients at the same time." Claims 19 and 27 recite "the user being logged on to at least two clients at the same time to receive electronic messages." Claim 29 recites generating a master presence status based on the client presence statuses "of the multiple clients through which the user is currently online." Each of these claims thus recites generating a master status based on multiple view statuses of a user who is logged on to different clients at the same time.

Based upon these remarks, applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application and its early allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned at (206) 359-8548.

Dated: November 22, 2004   Respectfully submitted,

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